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#158 (05/06)



## Nutrition

All women need to gain weight during their pregnancy. The foods that you eat as a pregnant woman are what your baby uses to grow.

### How Much Weight Should You Gain During Pregnancy?

How much weight you gain during pregnancy depends on your weight before pregnancy. A healthy gain for most women is between 25 and 35 pounds. Too much or too little weight gain may cause health problems for mother and baby.

Your baby is only part of the weight gain. Your own body must add blood, fluids and tissue and store nutrients. If you gain fewer pounds than is recommended, your baby's chances for good health go down at birth and later in life.

### What is the Recommended Weight Gain?

Pre-pregnancy Weight	Recommended Weight Gain
Average or Normal Adult Weight for Height	25-35 pounds
Underweight	28-40 pounds
Overweight	15-25 pounds
Obese	15 pounds

Source: Nutrition During Pregnancy, 1990. Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.

For a twin pregnancy, 35-45 pounds weight gain is recommended. In a triplet pregnancy, the overall gain should be about 50 pounds.

Most healthy babies weigh between 7 and 8 pounds. Some babies weigh a little less and some a little more. You may be asking yourself where does the additional weight go? The weight goes to make other changes in your body that are needed to help grow a strong, healthy baby and have a safe healthy birth for you and your baby.

### Where Does the Weight Go?

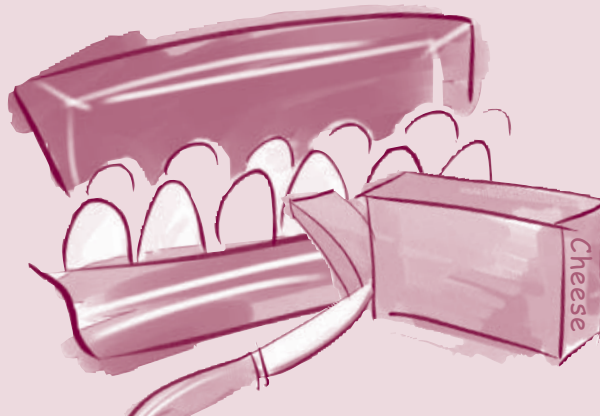
Baby .....	7 ½ pounds
Placenta .....	1 ½ pounds
Amniotic Fluid .....	2 pounds (the water around the baby)
Breasts .....	2 pounds
Uterus .....	2 pounds
Body Fluids .....	4 pounds
Blood .....	4 pounds
Maternal Stores of Protein, Fat and Other Nutrients .....	7 pounds

Source: Your Pregnancy & Birth, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), Washington, D.C.

- Fat is there to provide additional calories for breastfeeding.
- Pregnancy is **not** the time to try to lose weight. After pregnancy and nursing you will be able to cut down on calories.

### When Should You Gain Weight?

- Your weight gain should be steady throughout the pregnancy.
- During the first three months (1<sup>st</sup> trimester), most women can expect to gain about 2 to 4 pounds.
- During the last six months (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester), you may gain 3 to 4 pounds each month.
- Your baby gains most of his or her weight and has rapid brain growth during the last weeks of pregnancy.



### What Should You Eat to Gain Weight?

Always remember that you are eating to nourish your baby – not just to gain weight.

- To give your baby the best possible start in life, make smart food choices from the MyPyramid plan. You can learn more at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).
- The weight you gain needs to come from healthy foods that are good sources of vitamins and minerals.
- Limit other foods such as candy, cookies, cake, pie, soda and coffee. These foods do not contain all the nutrients necessary for you and your baby.

### How Will You Get Back Into Shape?

- With healthy eating and moderate exercise, you should be able to lose most of your pregnancy weight. Talk to your health care provider before you start an exercise program.
- Breastfeeding may help you take off pounds faster.

If you have any questions about your weight or weight gain during pregnancy, ask your health care provider or nutritionist. They have a sincere interest in the health of both you and your baby.

